



COT Security Alert - Recent Phishing Attempts

COT Security Administration Branch has become aware of a phishing email that has arrived in state email inboxes which is attempting to obtain the user's ID and password information by pretending to be from a "cyber crime department" of Microsoft. The email threatens to shut down the recipient's email account unless the information is provided within 24 hours and states that compliance is obligatory. Additionally, the email contains a logo that is similar to Microsoft's official logo.

There will be times that the Commonwealth Service Desk will contact users regarding notifications of infrastructure changes and alerts. These emails may include scheduling information, requests to exit your mail client before leaving, etc. It is important to note that these are official emails containing valuable information and will **never** require you to click on a link or reply to the message in order to provide any information concerning your account. In addition, no outside entity, such as Microsoft, has access or permission to manage or delete state email accounts.

When criminals obtain account credentials for logging into state email or other systems from state users, they often use the information for further illegal activities which can disrupt regular and necessary state business and/or allow access to confidential state information.

There is **never** a time when end-users can let down their guard against phishing emails and other fraud attempts. Users are urged **never** to respond to any email with personal information, including state account credentials, regardless of any threats the email may contain or how official it may appear.

Please distribute this email to end-users as an aid to awareness.

NOTICE: COT is providing this information so that you are aware of the latest security threats, vulnerabilities, software patches, etc. You should consult with your network administrator or other technical resources to ensure that the appropriate actions for these alerts are followed. If you are a network administrator and need additional information, please call the Help Desk at 502.564.7576.

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